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LETTER DATED 8 SEPTEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government and with reference to our successive letters to the Security Council concerning Eritrean aggressions against Sudanese territory, I would like to refer in particular to the contents of a letter from the regime of Eritrea, which is governed by the Popular Front. This letter is contained in document S/1997/635. I have the honour to inform you of the following:

(1) The Eritrean regime, which claimed that the Government of the Sudan violated its territory, is quite aware that it was its own troops that violated Sudanese territory last April. Eritrean troops invaded the eastern region of the country and occupied the area of Karora. It is the same area which the above-mentioned Eritrean document alleges was bombed by the Sudan using cluster bombs. The Eritrean regime not only occupied this area, but its forces occupied the area from Karora to Marafit in the north and up to Aquiqu on the coast, thus penetrating 112 kilometres inside Sudanese territory. The Eritrean regime, in its invasion of the Sudanese territory, used a whole infantry brigade. Its forces were concentrated in the areas of Rabasem, Kotaneb, and Tokar in Kassala state (45 kilometres inside Sudanese territory). The Sudan transmitted the details of this aggression to the Security Council at the time in a letter from the Sudanese Minister for Foreign Affairs (S/1997/271).

(2) Regarding what the Eritrean regime has stated about the violation of Eritrean airspace by Sudanese military aircraft, we should like to inform you that Germaika, which is mentioned in the Eritrean letter, is located exactly on the border between the two countries. From there, it is possible to observe Sudanese aircraft flying inside Sudanese airspace without violating the borders. Contrary to what the letter of the Eritrean regime states, it was Sudanese aircraft that were subjected to aggression and fire while flying inside Sudanese territory. We recall the shooting down of a Sudanese helicopter by Eritrean forces in the Sudanese town of Hamashkoraib, located on the Sudan-Eritrea border, which resulted in the death of the crew of the aircraft. This unfortunate incident, an account of which was transmitted to the esteemed

Council at the time (S/1997/2), represents concrete, tangible proof of the flagrant Eritrean aggression against the Sudan.

(3) Regarding also what the Eritrean regime has stated in the above-mentioned letter about cluster bombing, we should like to inform you that the Sudan does not even possess such a weapon. On the other hand, the records of the date specified in the Eritrean letter, that is, 24 July 1997, show that Sudanese forces did not carry out any flight mission that day. They did not even carry out routine logistical flights, not to mention military operations - which did not take place during all the last period.

(4) The aggressor Eritrean troops continue to carry out numerous military and hostile activities inside Sudanese territory. These include the following:

(a) Military field reconnaissance through continuous patrolling to target Sudanese military posts in the vicinity;

(b) Continuous activity and marine reconnaissance in the Port of Aquiqu;

(c) Utilization of the areas south of Toker for military and naval training, where 24-hour combat training takes place, including live ammunition exercises;

(d) Deployment of advanced shore artillery in Aquiqu to target Sudanese vessels;

(e) Continuous transport by convoys from inside the Eritrean territory of rations and military provisions for the troops;

(f) Establishment of military bases provided with the necessary forces so as to expand the military operation during the next stage;

(g) Placing of landmines indiscriminately in roads, which has resulted in huge losses in transport facilities and in the lives of innocent civilians.

(5) The flagrant hostility of the Eritrean regime towards the Sudan and its failure to deny its threats and its use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of the Sudan, in addition to its declared position against the people and the Government of the Sudan, explain the Eritrean regime's attempts to incite the international community against the Sudan. We have informed the Council before that the so-called Eritrean complaints against the Sudan are but a propaganda campaign carefully timed to support the plans of military aggression of the Eritrean regime against Sudanese territory.

(6) The Sudan has been keen to expose the intentions of the Eritrean regime. Moreover, the Sudan has adopted a policy of self-restraint so that peace, security and stability will prevail, particularly in the region and throughout Africa in general. The Government of the Sudan affirms once more its

wholehearted desire to maintain good relations with all States by respecting their sovereignty and refraining from interfering in their internal affairs. The Sudan thus expresses its dissatisfaction with and condemnation of the incessant series of aggressive acts directed against it by the Eritrean regime. The aim of these acts of aggression is to undermine the security and integrity of the Sudanese people in the first place. The Sudan reiterates that these hostile actions are incompatible with the international standards that should govern relations between States.

The Government of the Sudan, in submitting this information to the esteemed Council, calls upon the members of the Council to shoulder their responsibilities in deterring the repeated Eritrean acts of aggression against the Sudan and its people.

I request that this letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Elfatih M. ERWA
Permanent Representative